

Application No. 09/716,301
Reply to Office Action of February 27, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Amended Claim 16 is presently active in this application, Claims 1-15 having been canceled by the present Amendment.

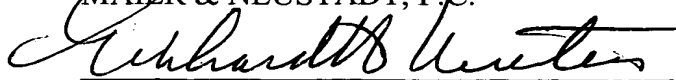
In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-15 were rejected under various grounds and Claim 16 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but otherwise indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that Claim 16 includes allowable subject matter. In light of this indication, and to expedite issuance of a patent from the present application, Claim 16 has been amended to be in independent form and Claims 1-15 have been canceled and will be re-submitted for further examination in a continuation application to be filed during pendency of the present application.

Accordingly, in view of the indication of allowable subject matter, no further issues are outstanding, and formal allowance is believed to be in order. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)

I:\ATTY\EHK\AMEND-RESPONSES\0039\20s\200054US-AM1.DOC